



A Message from the Saint Louis Zoo

Stingrays Come And I Wanna Go, Mom

(Sung to the tune of *The Banana Boat Song*)

What looked to be a difficult year in 2009 turned out to be a year of surprises for us. That, in good measure, was due to your leadership and support as we faced our challenges - the closure of a major highway near our front door and a major downturn in the economy.

Let's talk about the year we had.

- We had more visitors than any year in our history - 3,101,830!
- As a result, we said "thank you" to our general public with a week of free admission to the Emerson Children's Zoo.
- Our visitors spent more per person than any year in our history - \$6.94 each.
- More people joined the Zoo by year's end than in any other year in our history - 39,702 households - generating a record \$3 million in revenue.
- We received \$15,788,686 in philanthropic support in 2009 - a breath-taking outpouring of generosity.
- Our Marlin Perkins Society had 102 new members, plus 79 members increased their support.
- We reached 158.8 million people through a total of 2,219 new stories. That breaks out as 1,443 print stories to reach 108 million people and 776 TV stories to reach over 51 million broadcast viewers.

I could go on and on with the statistics, and there are more to come, but I think you get the idea. When other tourist destinations and businesses experienced difficult times, we met with the most success we have ever had in our rich and proud 99-year history. How did we do it?

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We trimmed our budgets and pared down. We brought in a special exhibit of animated dinosaurs in 2008 and last year we played our strongest card. We brought stingrays to the Saint Louis Zoo and let visitors touch and even feed these magical and mysterious creatures. I used the “squeal factor” as an index of how much people loved the exhibit.



Though we charged to help pay for the pavilion, the pool and the life support system, we allowed everyone who came to the Zoo during our free hour – the first hour of every single day we’re open – to experience the exhibit for free. They could park on the street for free, ride the Mary Ann Lee Conservation Carousel for free and visit the Children’s Zoo for free. And what happened? Attendance during the free hour rocketed to an all-time high. **About 17% of our stingray audience came during the free hour. Overall attendance during the free hour increased 300% over previous years!**

Too, the weather gods smiled on us. St. Louis experienced the coolest weather for the month of July in 38 years. And the Zoo’s monthly attendance in July topped any other month in the Zoo’s history – 554,583 visitors (we’ve been collecting data since 1980).

And we had even more to celebrate! In September the Association of Zoos and Aquariums announced that the Zoo was granted accreditation for the next five years by AZA’s independent Accreditation Commission. This followed intense year-long preparation for our inspection by the entire staff. “The Saint Louis Zoo is one of the best in the world because it has met the highest standards in the world,” said AZA President and CEO Jim Maddy.

In October we hosted over 300 guests from 20+ countries for the annual meeting of World Association of Zoos and Aquariums. Not only did we discuss the pressing conservation issues that zoos and aquariums are facing today, but we also took it as an opportunity to show off St. Louis. Our international guests loved the Zoo, and they were also “wowed” by the other cultural institutions they visited.

We had more good news. In the Animal Division:

- Three king penguins hatched at Penguin & Puffin Coast.
- For the first time, a visit to the Mary Ann Lee Butterfly Wing meant a trip throughout the world with alternating exhibition of butterflies and moths to represent Africa, New World and Asia.
- A female Bactrian camel, critically endangered in Mongolia, and a female mountain bongo, an endangered species in Africa, were born at the Zoo’s Antelope area.
- Three new Cotswold-Border Leicester sheep and 13 Delaware chickens are a popular part of the new barnyard area of the Children’s Zoo.



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- In July four Caucasus vipers, an endangered species native to Turkey, the Republic of Georgia and Russia, were born. To date we are the only institution in North America that has reproduced them.

- For the first time, Micronesian kingfishers went on display in the Bird House. This critically endangered bird is extinct in the wild and has been part of an off-display breeding program at the Zoo since 1985.



- To help care for the animals, the Animal Health Department entered the digital age with installation of a state-of-the-art radiology system. Also, we took a leadership position in research of elephant endotheliotropic herpesvirus, successfully treated four cases, utilized new treatment regimes and intensive care procedures, and hosted a national EEHV conference.

The WildCare Institute reached some major milestones.

- This year two national parks in Armenia were established to protect endangered mountain vipers and other fauna. In part this is a result of Jeff Ettl's WildCare Center for Conservation of Near East Vipers.
- Peru extended protection to over 90 coastal areas that support Humboldt penguins and other wildlife, in part due to WildCare's work in Punta San Juan and support for Dr. Patricia Majluf and her colleagues in Peru.
- At the Zoo's hellbender conservation and research facility at the Charles H. Hoessle Herpetarium, over 3,000 eggs were laid by females. Though the eggs were not fertile, hellbenders have never bred in

captivity, and this is a promising step forward. Also, nine hellbenders "fostered" at the Zoo and released into a Missouri stream were found alive by tracking their radio transmitters.

- Dr. Pete Black, our zoological medicine resident, traveled to Niger to provide veterinary services to the red-necked ostrich reintroduction project, part of our Saharan Wildlife Recovery Center.

Plans are underway for some exciting new changes.

- A total renovation of the interior of the 1917 Elephant House is underway. In the future, the new exhibit hall will house traveling exhibitions. Our first exciting exhibit which opens this May will be Zootennial, presented by First Bank, a celebration of the Zoo's 100 year anniversary showing the Zoo's history through artifacts, personal stories, photographs and historical articles and images. The exhibit is being curated in collaboration with the Missouri History Museum.
- The Wachovia Wells Fargo Foundation South Arrival Experience will include a new pedestrian bridge connecting the south parking lot and the south entrance to the Zoo. The parking lot will undergo a "greening" with new plantings, trees, sculpture and a pervious paving system. Our official dedication will be in September.



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- Bids for the new Sea Lion Habitat and Arena project are scheduled to be sought this fall.
- Construction is underway of an off-display habitat, Elephant Woods, utilizing an unused portion of land just west of River's Edge with a thick canopy and forest environment.

What have we done to benefit the Zoo?

- The Development staff hosted 765 meetings with donors and prospective donors and hosted more than 300 donor tours. The Living Promise Campaign continues in its "quiet phase" until mid-2010. About \$58.2 million, or 48.5% of the overall goal of \$120 million, has been reached.
- The William R. Orthwein, Jr. and Laura Rand Orthwein Foundation announced a gift of \$1.5 million to endow the Zoo's position of Animal Nutritionist.
- We have 27 new Heritage Society members, a record high.



- The Group Sales/Private Events team finished the year with 365 rental events and a total revenue income of \$1.5 million. Also, we sold 368 Behind-the-Scenes Tours.
- We received a prestigious national safety achievement award from the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions.



- Facilities Management, which handles maintenance, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, horticulture and more, completed 4,259 work orders throughout the Zoo.
- Food Service will reopen Lakeside Café in March when it's been refurbished with paint, cosmetic repairs, new furniture and new acoustic treatment.

What have we done for our community?

- A greater percentage of St. Louis residents – 52% – visited the Saint Louis Zoo than any other local attraction.
- Also, 49% of tourists visited the Zoo, making it the second most popular attraction for out-of-towners after the Arch.
- We achieved a total of 1,581,522 on-grounds interactions with visitors, including formal Education programs, docent volunteers, interpreters and keeper chats.
- This is vitally important. Audience research shows that the overall Zoo experience of our visitors who have interacted with someone at the Zoo is better in a number of measures: overall visit satisfaction, educational experience and entertainment experience, to name just a few.

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- The Education Department reached 117,670 visitors in formal programs, plus another 350,637 visitors at the Stingrays at Caribbean Cove exhibit. In addition, outreach programs touched 41,761 participants in the community or in distance learning.

We enjoy our home in Forest Park and our ongoing collaboration:

- As a donation to Forest Park, the Zoo is constructing the segment of the walkers/bikers dual path that adjoins the south parking lot. It's scheduled to open this spring.
- As part of a program on native pollinator conservation, our Invertebrate Department worked with Forest Park Forever, St. Louis Department of Parks, Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri Botanical Garden and WildCare's Center for Conservation of Forest Park to survey native bees around the St. Louis region.

- In April, our goats from the Children's Zoo worked with Forest Park Forever to help eradicate invasive honeysuckle bushes in Forest Park.

We may not experience the kind of year in 2010 that we did in 2009. The weather may not be as mild or a reawakening economy might result in our audience going on vacations instead of "stay-cations." But we have a huge amount to look forward to through the course of this new year. We will celebrate our Zootennial with a wonderful new exhibit that will be featured in a beautifully renovated new hall. We'll welcome back our amazing stingrays and, maybe add a surprise or two to that exhibit.

Once again, thank you. The one thing that was not a surprise is your steadfast dedication to our Zoo.

Jeffery P. Bonner, Ph.D.
Dana Brown President and CEO